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AIRGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TO : Department of State

DEPT PASS: CINCSO FOR POLAD - 1

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: November 13th, 1970

SUBJECT : INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents,
October, 1970

REF :

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
NOV 18 1970

SUMMARY: For the second consecutive month, the number of politically motivated acts of violence was very high. The Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) were active. In the capital, one policeman and one ex-agent were picked up during an attempted theft of a taxi cab. The South Coast's continued violence occasioned two feature press stories during the month. And pressure for government action against banditry and terrorism seemed to be mounting.

1. During the month ten assaults of possible political nature occurred against policemen, in which four died. On October 2, assailants attacked and wounded a Judicial Policeman on foot patrol in downtown Guatemala in an exchange of gunfire; one of the attackers, identified in the press as a subversive, was killed. On October 9, the press reported the suicide of a National Policeman. The suspicious circumstances suggest foul play. On October 12, a shot fired from the street killed a National Policeman visiting with friends in a capital restaurant, and in another part of the City, machinegun fire from a passing car seriously wounded a police inspector; he remains in grave condition. On October 14, only hours after the Costa Rican President departed the country, four men identifying themselves as FAR members shot at a policeman standing guard duty at that Embassy, wounding him in the leg. The Costa Rican Ambassador is convinced that it was a kidnapping attempt, but that the fact that he was taking a siesta foiled the plan. A fourth policeman was killed by a group of men on a San Marcos finca at the end of the month.

2. The four incidents which received the most press play this month occurred in the capital area. On October 2, a military jeep patrol seized two men during a kidnapping attempt who later turned out to be a 4th Corps

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policeman and an ex-police agent. On October 6, two youths were found tortured and shot to death and left on the shore of Lake Atitlan; and a third youth was found dead on the Escuintla-San Jose highway; witnesses claimed the police had earlier abducted the three in Guatemala City. On October 9, youths claiming to be FAR members and carrying automatic weapons took over a meeting on EXMIBAL, a U.S. nickel company, in the economic school building of San Carlos University for a few minutes and gave a revolutionary lecture to students and faculty against the company. Finally, on October 21, dynamite time bombs blew apart a stolen car parked near the residence of Congressional President Mario SAMBOVAL; no serious injuries occurred (see GUATEMALA 3925 [REDACTED] 31 EC

3. Kidnappings also made the news. In early October, the press reported that local businessman Salomon Blenkitny was kidnapped and released for a ransom of Q100,000. Although the press stories were denied [REDACTED] 31 EC

[REDACTED] In mid-October, in Escuintla, a well-known businessman was kidnapped and found dead five days later. Also in that Department, Roberto Echeverria, a ranch owner, was kidnapped and released in exchange for Q100,000. The press recently reported alleged FAR and PGT/FAR November 2 press communiques denying their participation in the Blenkitny and Echeverria cases, casting the blame on "high military and political officials."

4. Similar to last month, numerous acts of violence also took place on the South Coast; in addition to the kidnappings noted above, robberies, ranch burnings, and assassinations were in the news. More than a half-dozen attacks took place on South Coast ranches by groups of armed men in October. The press reported that groups of olive green uniformed men in San Marcos Department carried out several killings. On October 8, such groups entered three houses and shot down five persons, including a "comisionado militar"; a second "comisionado" in that Department was shot to death several days later in an ambush by a volley of .45 and 9mm slugs.

5. These South Coast incidents have occasioned two feature press articles on specific organized bands of bandits or guerrillas, one in the coffee-growing areas of Quezaltenango and another in Tecun Uman, San Marcos. One Army company is on continual patrol in a border region incorporating the latter area and we learned that the military will soon initiate a smaller scale operation in Quezaltenango [REDACTED] 31 EC [REDACTED] reported to an Embassy of [REDACTED] believes [REDACTED] are using rugged terrain around Colomba for their bases of operation.

6. The PGT/FAR has limited its action of late largely to propaganda bombs about the country, probably still fearing a GOG crackdown; however, the FAR maintains its level of activities which were stepped up in September. Pressure for government counter action against continuing subversive

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activity (and banditry) is mounting. Arana's closest advisors, Cabinet Ministers, the business community and certain high officials in the military have asked the President to take decisive action. Other sectors have voiced concern: A DCG deputy told the press in early October that the government has the clear obligation to take pertinent security actions if there is extremist action on the left or right. And the student-sponsored October 20 commemoration march against repression, despite its light turnout, did express AEU concern on the subject, although their concern is more with government "regression" than leftist activity. The President is well aware of this pressure; on October 24 at a military anniversary ceremony, the President told several hundred military officers (see A-237) that his situation and responsibilities were different than in Zacapa (when he was Regional Commander, 1966-1968) and he could not act in the same manner. He wished to avoid the bloodshed of those days and asked for their patience and full support. The loud ovation he received on finishing indicated he had the support of his audience.


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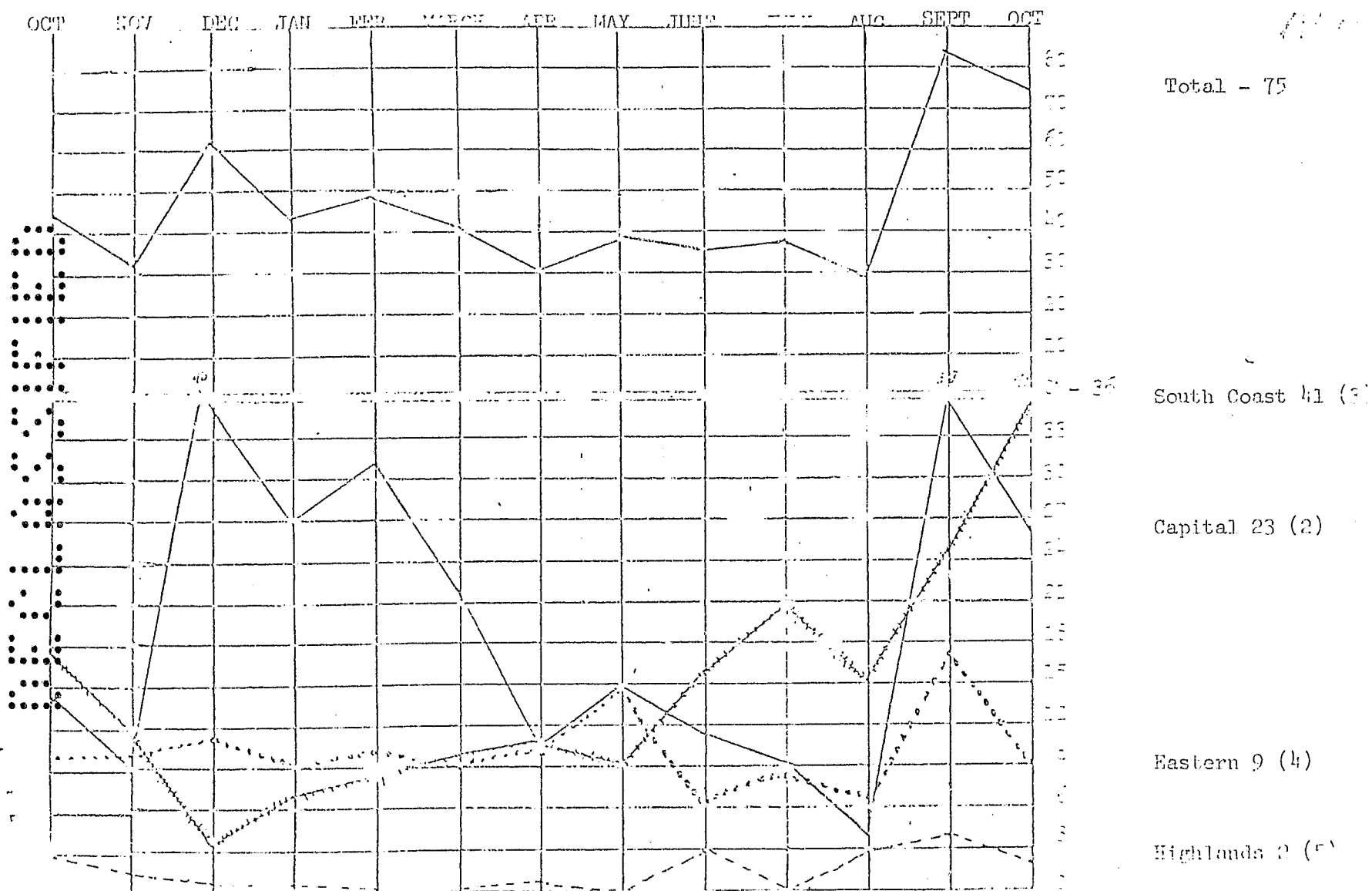
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION - OCTOBER 1960 - OCTOBER 1970



1. For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings and assassinated bodies.
2. Capital Area: Sacatepequez, Guatemala
3. South Coast: San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
4. Eastern Region: Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Macara, Chiquimula, Izabal
5. Highlands: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Solola

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